



County of San Bernardino • Department of Public Health
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

<http://www.sbcounty.gov/dehs>

Questions Call: (909) 387-3171

FOOD SAFETY AFTER THE FIRE

POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD THAT HAS BEEN OUT OF TEMPERATURE FOR PROLONGED PERIODS MAY CAUSE ILLNESSES. ALL FOOD OUT OF TEMPERATURE IN REFRIGERATORS and FREEZERS MUST BE DISCARDED.

To properly dispose of food that was previously refrigerated or frozen:

- CAREFULLY place all food in heavy trash bags.
- BE CAREFUL as to not allow packages to open/explode.
- DO NOT open packages. There is a potential risk of illness if the potentially hazardous product (i.e. meat) opens and comes in contact with you.

What should I discard?

- Food that was not in the refrigerator but has possibly come in contact with water should also be discarded. This would include all fruits, vegetables, unpackaged products, screw top jars, cardboard packaging and plastic packaging. If in doubt, throw it out.
- Food that has been exposed to high heat from the fire should also be discarded. This would also include food in cans, glass jars and food in packages. Microorganisms in the cans and jars may have been activated which could cause illness later on. If a can starts to swell, immediately discard it.
- Food that has experienced smoke damage should also be discarded. This would include any unpackaged foods and foods in permeable packaging such as cardboard and some plastics.

Use protective equipment and safe food handling practices when handling the food:

- USE disposable gloves. If heavier gloves are needed, use disposable gloves under the heavy gloves, to prevent contact with spoiled food.
- USE facemasks to help with the offensive odors and to provide face protection. Rubbing Vicks under your nose may also help with the strong odor.
- USE goggles if available to prevent secretions from entering your eyes.
- WASH YOUR HANDS immediately after removing your gloves. Also, wash your hands prior to touching yourself, anyone else, or prior to eating or drinking.
- USE a safe source of water. If you are under a boil water order, boil the water, and cool it prior to washing your hands. Also, boil water prior to using it to prepare food. Acceptable water is water that is boiled vigorously for at least 3-5 minutes. Add an additional 1-minute of time for each additional 1,000 feet of elevation.

To sanitize the refrigerators and freezers:

- USE household bleach. **DO not use scented bleach, whiteners, or other bleaches with special properties used for washing clothes.** Mix a solution of at least 100ppm. To make a bleach solution use 2 capfuls per gallon of water. Instructions are also available on the containers.
OR USE a quaternary ammonia solution of at least 200 ppm.
- **DO NOT MIX BLEACH AND AMMONIA!!!! USE ONLY ONE SOLUTION!!!!**
- DO NOT use anything stronger than bleach or ammonia. Do not use a caustic agent such as lye.